

Intelligent Transportation in Rural and Small Urban Areas

The Challenges We Face

Christopher J. Hill

Chair, Advanced Rural Transportation
Systems Committee

ITS America

Rural America

- 83% of the nation's land
- 21% of its population (50 million people)
- 18% of jobs
- 14% of earnings
- Of approximately 3,000 counties, 2,300 are rural, according to 1990 census

Rural Roads

- Comprise 80% of national road miles
- Approximately 4 million miles
- Carry 40% of vehicle miles traveled

Rural Roads

- Only 50% are paved
- 90% are 2-lane or less
- City and county governments responsible for 95% of unpaved and 55% of paved roads

Rural Travelers

- Average age of rural traveler is 46, versus 40 in urban areas
- 18% of rural drivers are 64+ years, versus 8% in urban areas

Rural Trips

- Support the nation's goods movement
- Fundamental to local vitality through residents and tourists
- 78% of trips greater than 150 miles are for pleasure

Rural Transportation Problems

- Challenging geography - steep grades, mountain passes
- More dramatic weather events, and effects on road conditions
- A sparse and patchy telecoms infrastructure
- Dispersed system with high unit costs for service delivery, operations & maintenance

Rural Transportation Problems

- Higher frequency of crashes & greater proportion of deaths - 58% of fatalities & 55% of work zone fatalities
- Slower emergency response - rural response is 1½ times urban response; 5% of crashes unreported for more than 30 minutes

Rural Transportation Problems

- Limited or non-existent public transportation
 - 38% of rural residents have no public transportation
 - a further 28% live in areas with negligible service

Users Want Rural ITS

- Enhance safety; improve emergency response
- Provide information - especially road and weather conditions
- Make public transportation more available and accessible
- Enhance the tourism/recreational travel experience

Federal Initiatives

- Research studies -
traveler info & public
transportation
- Rural outreach -
simple solutions; peer-
to-peer
- Rural Team
- ARTS Strategic Plan
- ARTS Program Plan
- Operational tests
 - Mayday
 - Transit
 - Tourism
 - Weather
- Rural support contract

State and Local Initiatives

- Arizona
- Greater Yellowstone
- I-95 Corridor Coalition
- Kansas
- Maine/New Hampshire/Vermont
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Montana
- New York
- Virginia
- Washington State
- Wisconsin

Rural ITS Stakeholders

- U.S. DOT
- State DOT
- Town, city, county government
- State police
- Local law enforcement
- Fire and rescue
- Emergency medical
- Transit operators
- Health/human services
- Regional planning authorities
- Tourism/economic development
- Chambers of commerce
- Other Federal (NPS, NWS)

Engaging the Stakeholders

- Fewer tangible examples to point to
- Diverse groups with a variety of interests and motivations
- In many instances, transportation is not the “hook”

Local Elected Officials

- “Intelligent what?”
- “Show me the commanding reason for doing this.”
- “How much will it cost and where do I get the money?”
- “How will my constituents respond to this?”
 - Hon. Eleanor Towe, Blue Ridge District Supervisor, Loudoun County, Virginia

Reaching the Stakeholders

- ITS America provides opportunities, including the state chapters and national rural ITS conference
- Federal and state DOT personnel dominate at these events
- Some local government staff attend, but other stakeholders are largely absent

Searching for Solutions

- Alliances with other associations can provide access to stakeholders and enhance credibility
- Reach out to the stakeholders at their own national conferences and local meetings

The Challenges in Summary

- Crafting the right message
- Finding the right forum

Contacts

Christopher Hill

Castle Rock Consultants

703-771-0020

hill@crc-corp.com

Rob Puentes

ITS America

202-484-4663

rpuentes@itsa.org